



COUNCIL AGENDA: 3-16-04
ITEM: 12.1(f)(1), (2)

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Stephen M. Haase

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: February 25, 2004

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 7
SNI AREA: None

SUBJECT: GP03-07-11/GPT03-07-11: General Plan and Specific Plan Text Amendments to amend the Communications Hill Specific Plan Chapter 3.2.b and the *San Jose 2020 General Plan* Chapter V as follows: 1) allow a reduction to the 24 DU/AC minimum density on certain blocks to a minimum 17 DU/AC, provided that the average density within the project area is within the 24-40 DU/AC range; and 2) allow reductions to the required 30-foot minimum front-to-front building separation distance for multi-family housing on approximately 7.3 acres on a site located on the north side of Hillsdale Avenue, opposite the terminus of Vista Park Drive.

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission voted (6-0-1 Platten absent) to recommend the adoption of the proposed General Plan and Specific Plan text amendments to allow the following changes: 1) a reduction to the 24 DU/AC minimum density on certain blocks to a minimum 17 DU/AC provided that the average density within the project area is within the 24-40 DU/AC range; and 2) reductions to the required 30-foot minimum front-to-front building separation distance for multi-family housing on a site located on the North side of Hillsdale Avenue, opposite the terminus of Vista Park Drive.

BACKGROUND

On February 9, 2004, the Planning Commission held a public hearing to consider a privately initiated text amendments to amend the Communications Specific Hill Plan (CHSP), Chapter 3.2.b, and the *San Jose 2020 General Plan*, Chapter V to allow: 1) a reduction to the 24 DU/AC minimum density on certain blocks to a minimum 17 DU/AC, provided that the average density within the project area is within the 24-40 DU/AC range; and 2) reductions to the required 30-foot minimum front-to-front building separation distance for multi-family housing on approximately 7.3 acres on a site located on the north side of Hillsdale Avenue, opposite the terminus of Vista Park Drive.

The Director of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement recommended approval of the proposed text amendments. As explained in the attached staff report, the proposed text amendments (see attached) are consistent with the General Plan Major Strategies, goals, and policies in that they would facilitate the build-out of the Communications Hill Specific Plan area.

ANALYSIS

The applicant, KB Homes, has a desire to build single-family homes as well as a higher density podium residential project and therefore would not be able to meet the minimum 24 dwelling unit per acre density per block as required by the Specific Plan. The applicant has worked with staff to determine the particular blocks that may be considered on a case-by-case basis for a reduction to the minimum density per block. While a reduction to the minimum density required under the Specific Plan would be allowed (i.e., no lower than 17 DU/AC), the overall Planned Development Zoned project area will be required to meet the 24-40 dwelling unit per acre average and, therefore, would not jeopardize the vision for the development of a primarily multi-family residential, urban neighborhood. In order to provide for this, the Specific Plan text amendment also allows density to exceed 40 DU/AC on some blocks in order to balance for blocks where reduced density is implemented. The applicant's representative, John Moniz of HMM Engineers, spoke in support of the text amendment.

Commission Discussion

At the request of Commissioner Zito, this item was removed from the consent calendar and opened for discussion. Commissioner Zito asked for clarification as to the purpose of the amendment and the proposed housing types to be built. John Moniz, representing the applicant, responded that the request was based on the applicant's desire to build a mix of single-family homes and a high-density residential podium building.

Commissioner Zito asked whether Planning staff expects to see similar requests to lower densities in the future. Staff responded that consideration is being given to a future text amendment that would create similar density flexibility provisions for the remainder of the Specific Plan area, while retaining or increasing the overall average densities required. Staff further clarified that the 4,000 dwelling unit capacity of the CHSP would not change under the proposed amendment, therefore maintaining consistency with the CHSP and the General Plan.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The property owners and occupants within a 1,000-foot radius were sent a newsletter regarding the two community meetings that were held on January 14 and 15, 2004. They also received a notice of the public hearings to be held on the subject amendment before the Planning Commission on February 9 and City Council on March 16, 2004. In addition, the Department's web site contains information regarding the General Plan process, amendments, staff reports, and hearing schedule. This site is available to any member of the public and contains the most current information regarding the status of the amendments. Staff has received no phone calls or written correspondence.

COORDINATION

The review of this General Plan amendment was coordinated with the Department of Public Works, Fire Department, Police Department, City Attorney, the Airport Department, the Valley Transportation Agency, and the Airport Land Use Commission.

CEQA

The subject text amendment is consistent with the findings of the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Communications Hill Specific Plan, resolution no. 63624, certified on April 7, 1992.

STEPHEN M. HAASE
Secretary, Planning Commission